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HERAKLES

THE
RHESUS
OF
EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH RHYMING VERSE
WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES BY

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INTRODUCTION

THIS short play needs rather a long introduction. It has had the bad fortune to become a literary problem, and almost all its few readers are so much occupied with the question whether it can be the work of Euripides —and if not his, whose?—that they seldom allow themselves to take it on its merits as a stirring and adventurous piece, not particularly profound or subtle, but always full of movement and life and possessing at least one or two scenes of great and penetrating beauty.

The outlines of the *Rhesus* Question are these.— The *Rhesus* appears in the MSS. of Euripides; we know from the Athenian Didascaliae, or Records of Performances, that Euripides wrote a play of the name; some passages in it are quoted by early Alexandrian writers as from "the *Rhesus* of Euripides;" no passage is quoted under any other name. This seems about as strong as external evidence need be. Yet the ancient introduction to the play mentions that "some think the play spurious," and expresses the odd opinion that "it suggests rather the Sophoclean style." Further, it tells us that, besides the present opening scene, there were extant two different prologues, one of which was "quite prosy and perhaps concocted by the actors." This seems to show that the Alexandrian scholars who tried for the first

time to collect the complete works of Euripides, some two centuries after his death, found this play current as "Euripides' *Rhesus*," but that it was credited with three different openings and that its style was felt to be somehow peculiar.

The peculiarity of style is incontestable. It does not to our judgment suggest Sophocles. It suggests a young man imitating Aeschylus, and it has a great number of Euripidean expressions. Hermann, who collected what he took to be "imitations" of early poets in the *Rhesus*, noted only 25 of Sophocles, 38 of Aeschylus, and 84 of Euripides.

Is it, then, the work of a somewhat imitative fourth-century poet, naturally influenced by his great forerunners? Hardly: because, with a few exceptions, the verse and diction of the *Rhesus*, are markedly early in character, the verse severe and smooth, the diction direct and rather grandiose, the choral lyrics strictly relevant. In Euripides' later years Drama was moving rapidly away from all these things and, as far as we can judge, continued so moving after his death. If the *Rhesus* is a post-classical play it can hardly be honest fourth-century work: it must be deliberately archaistic, a product of the Alexandrian spirit if not actually of the Alexandrian age. This is what Hermann believed. But unfortunately it is not a bit more like our fragments of Alexandrian tragedy than it is like the *Medea*; and, further, if it is an Alexandrian pseudo-classic tragedy, how did it succeed in deceiving the Alexandrian critics, detectives specially trained for this kind of work?

Let us try quite a different hypothesis, and begin by

accepting the external evidence as true. The famous critic, Crates, of the second century B.C., happens to mention—in excuse of what he took to be a slip in the poet's astronomy—that the *Rhesus* of Euripides was a youthful work. Now the earliest dated tragedy of Euripides that we possess is the *Alcestis*, B.C. 438, written when he was about forty-six. His style may well have been considerably different fifteen or twenty years earlier, and must certainly have been much under the influence of Aeschylus. So far, so good. Then what of the other difficulties, the three different opening scenes and the few passages of late phrasing or technique? One obvious explanation suits both. The three different openings pretty clearly imply that the play was reproduced more than once after the poet's death and adapted by the producer for each occasion. This happened to many plays of Euripides, and in one case we even know the name of the producer; he was Euripides the Younger, son of the poet. Among other things we have reason to believe that he wrote some parts of the *Iphigenia in Aulis*. And in this connexion we can hardly help noticing that the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, like the *Rhesus* and like no other Greek tragedy, has two alternative openings, one a dull prologue and one a lyrical scene in anapaests under the stars. The general style of the two plays is utterly different; the *Iphigenia* is most typically late Euripidean; but one would not be surprised to learn that they had both passed at some time through the same revising hand.

This hypothesis seems to work well. But one difficulty remains.

We have so far gone on the supposition that

Euripides at twenty-five or thirty perhaps wrote very differently from Euripides at forty-six, and that the manner we call Euripidean is only the manner of his later life. There is nothing improbable in this suggestion, but have we any evidence? Yes, a very little, and unfortunately it does not say what we want. We have some fragments—twenty lines altogether—preserved from the *Peliades*, with which Euripides won his first victory in the year 455, seventeen years before the *Alcestis*, and as far as they go they are just in his ordinary manner—a good deal more so, in fact, than much of the *Alcestis* is. Let us face this difficulty.

The ordinary style of Euripides is full, flexible, lucid, antithetic, studiously simple in vocabulary and charged with philosophic reflection. If we look in his extant remains for any trace of a style, like that of the *Rhesus*, which is comparatively terse, rich, romantic, not shrinking from rare words and strong colour and generally untinged by philosophy, we shall find the nearest approach to it in the *Cyclops*. Next to the *Cyclops* I am not sure what play would come, but the *Alcestis* would not be far off. It has especially several Epic forms which cannot be paralleled in tragedy. Now the conjunction of these two plays with the *Rhesus* is significant. The three seem to be three earliest of the extant plays; they are also—if we count the *Heraclidae* as mutilated—the three shortest. But, what is more important, the *Cyclops* is not a tragedy but a satyr-play, and the *Alcestis* is a tragedy of a special sort, written to take the place of a satyr-play. It is a tragedy with some half grotesque figures and a fantastic atmosphere.

This is no place for a close analysis of the diction of the various works of Euripides; but taking one rough test, just for what it is worth, we may try to count the number of words in each play which are not found elsewhere in Euripides. The *Medea*, a central sort of play, has in its 1419 lines 103 such words. The *Alcestis*, with 1163 lines, has 122; the *Rhesus*, with less than 1000 lines, has 177; the *Cyclops*, with only 701 lines, has actually 220. This calculation is doubtless slightly inexact: in any case it is worth very little until it is carefully analysed. But on the whole it accords with my general impression that the *Rhesus* in its variation from the Euripidean norm goes further than the *Alcestis*, and not so far as the *Cyclops*, and goes in very much the same direction. I feel in the *Rhesus* a good deal of that curious atmosphere, not exactly comic, but wild and extravagant, which the Greeks felt to be suited to the Satyr horde; the atmosphere normally breathed by the one-eyed Giant of the cavern on volcanic Aetna, or the drunken and garlanded Heracles who wrestles with Death and cracks his ribs for him at midnight among the tombs. The whole scene and setting of the *Rhesus*; the man-wolf crawling away into the darkness and his two enemies presently crawling in out of the same darkness with his bloody spoils; the divine Thracian king with his round targe that shines by night and his horses whiter than the snow; the panic of the watch, the vaunting of the doomed chieftain, the goddess disguised as another goddess, the thrilling half-farcical scene where the spy Odysseus is actually caught and befools his captors: these things are not of course comic, like some incidents in the *Cyclops*. They

belong to tragedy; but they are near the outside limit of the tragic convention, and would perhaps be most at home in a pro-satyric tragedy like the *Alcestis*.

In the upshot I see no adequate reason for rejecting the external evidence which makes this play a work of Euripides, if we suppose it to be an early pro-satyric play which was produced again after the poet's death by Euripides the Younger or some contemporary. Most scholars, however, prefer to think it simply an archaistic work of the fourth century.

On this theory the Alexandrians when looking for the *Rhesus* of Euripides found an anonymous play called *Rhesus* and accepted it for what it was worth. The Prologues mentioned in the argument would perhaps belong to other plays of the same name; one, no doubt, to the real play of Euripides. The rich and severe style may, for all we know—for direct evidence fails us—be the natural mark of some reactionary archaistic school about the time of Plato or Aristotle. The same date might well be indicated by the great interest our play takes in the Iliad, and by its almost "Alexandrian" use of the gods as ornamental machinery. I cannot call such a theory improbable; but it really amounts to rejecting the external evidence in order to place the *Rhesus* in a period of tragic style of which we happen to know nothing. It is certainly not confirmed by the scanty fragments we possess of Theodectes or Chairemon.

And, if one is to venture into more speculative and subjective arguments, I find it rather hard to think of any lyric poet except Euripides who could have written the Adrasteia chorus or the lines about

the Nightingale in the Watchers' Song; of any playwright except Euripides who would have ended a play of gallant martial adventure with the vision of a solitary mother clasping her dead son. There are many other passages, too, like the mysterious sobbing in the dark that heralds the entry of the wounded Thracian, and the final passing out of the army to its certain defeat, which seem to me more like undeveloped genius than common imitative mediocrity. If a nameless fourth-century poet wrote this play, I think we should have heard more of him.

The story of the play is taken straight from the Doloneia, an Epic rhapsody which now takes its place as the Tenth Book of the Iliad, but was very likely independent in the time of Euripides (*Rise of the Greek Epic*, p. 313 f.). The play seems in one or two points to follow a more archaic model than the version in our Homer. (See notes on l. 150 and l. 175.)

In Rhesus himself—the name is said to be the Thracian form of *rex*[1]—we seem to have the traditional divine king of the Thracian tribes about Pangaion, seen through the eyes of Greek romance. He is the son of the greatest of Rivers and the Muse of the Mountain: she is simply "The Muse," otherwise nameless, and we are lost if we try to bind her down to the identity of any Greek goddess. Like many Thracian heroes Rhesus has a dash of the Sun-god in him, the burning targe, the white horses and the splendour. Like them he is a boaster and

[1] Perdrizet, *Cultes et Mythes de Pangée*, p. 17.

a deep drinker, a child of battle and of song. Like other divine kings he dies in his youth and strength, and keeps watch over his people from some "feasting presence, full of light," where he lies among the buried silver-veins of Pangaion. If the uttermost need comes, doubtless he will wake again. When the Athenians began making their dangerous settlements on the coast of Thrace—ten thousand settlers were massacred by Rhesus's people about 465 B.C: Amphipolis not fully established till 437—they found the legend of Rhesus in the air, and eventually they thought it prudent to send for his hallowed bones from the Troad, where they were supposed to be buried, and give them a tomb in the Athenian colony. Possibly that pacified him. And his legend in the mouth of the poets seemed perhaps like the story of his own mountaineers, multitudes of strong men, stormy and chivalrous, terrible in onset, who somehow in the end melted away before the skill and persistent courage of a civilised Greek city.

RHESUS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

HECTOR, *Prince of Îlion and General of the Trojan Armies.*
AENÊAS, *a Trojan Prince.*
DOLON, *a Trojan.*
PARIS, *also called* ALEXANDER, *brother of Hector.*
RHÊSUS, *King of Thrace, son of the River Strŷmon and the Muse of the Mountains.*
A THRACIAN, *the King's charioteer.*
ODYSSEUS, *a Greek chieftain, famous for craft and daring.*
DIOMÊDÊS, *a Greek chieftain, famous for valour.*
A SHEPHERD.

The Goddess ATHÊNA.
The MUSE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

CHORUS *of Trojan Guards with their* LEADER.
Some THRACIANS *with their* CAPTAIN, *Attendants, &c.*

The date and authorship of the play are unknown; it probably belongs to the Fifth Century B.C., and is attributed to Euripides.

RHESUS

It is a cloudy but moonlight night on the plain before Troy. The Trojans and their allies have won a decisive victory and are camping on the open field close to the Greek outposts. The scene is in front of a rude tent or hut that has been set up for HECTOR, *the Trojan leader. A watch-fire burns low in front. Far off at the back can be seen rows of watch-fires in the Greek camp. The road to Troy is in front to the left; the road to Mount Ida leads far away to the right.*

All is silence; then a noise outside. Enter tumultuously a band of Trojan Pickets.

VARIOUS VOICES.

(*The dash — in these passages indicates a new speaker.*)

On to the Prince's quarters !—Ho !
Who is awake ? What man-at-arms,
Or squire or groom ?—Let Hector know
    New rumour of alarms
From sentinels who stand at mark
The four long watches of the dark,
While others sleep.—Uplift thine head,
O Hector ! On thine elbow rise,
Unhood the eagle of thine eyes,
    Up from thy leaf-strewn bed !—

Lord Hector !

HECTOR (*coming out from the tent*).

Who goes there? Who cries?
A friend? The watchword! . . . By what right
Do men come prowling in the night
Across my quarters? Come! Speak out.

LEADER.

A picket, Lord.

HECTOR.

In such a rout?

LEADER.

Be not afraid, Lord.

HECTOR.

I am not.
Is there an ambush? No? Then what,
In God's name, brings you from your post
With no clear tale to speak,
To spread this turmoil through a host
That lies in harness—do ye all
Know nothing?—out against the wall
And gateways of the Greek?

CHORUS (*various voices confusedly*). [*Strophe.*

To arms! To arms, Lord Hector!—Send
First where the allied armies lie,
Bid them draw sword and make an end
Of sleep.—Let someone fly
And get the horses' armour on!—
Who goes with me to Panthoös' son?—

Who's for Sarpêdon and the Lycians?—None
Hath seen the priest go by?—
Ho, Captain of the Runners, ho!—
Ho, Trojans of the hornèd bow!
String, string! For need is nigh.

HECTOR.

Ha, silence there! . . .
First words of fear,
Then comfort. All an empty swell!
It seems the lash of trembling Pan
Hath caught you. Speak, if speak ye can.
What tidings? Not a word is clear
Of the whole tale ye tell.
[*The turmoil subsides, the* LEADER *comes forward.*

LEADER. [*Antistr.*

Great beacons in the Argive line
Have burned, my chief, through half the night.
The shipyard timbers seemed to shine.
Then, clear against the light,
Toward Agamemnon's tent the whole
Army in tumult seemed to roll,
As stirred by some strange voice, shoal after shoal.
A night of such discord
Was never seen. And we, in dread
What such things boded, turned and sped
Hither; dost blame us, Lord?

HECTOR (*after a moment of thought*).

No! Welcome, friend, with all thy tale of fear!
It shows they mean to fly: they mean to clear

Decks in the dark and so delude my sight . . .
I like that beacon-burning in the night.
O Zeus above, who checked my conquering way,
Who baulked the hungry lion of his prey
Or ever I could sweep my country clear
Of these despoilers, dost thou hate my spear?
Had but the sun's bright arrows failed me not,
I ne'er had rested till the ships were hot
With fire, and through the tents upon the plain
This bloody hand had passed and passed again!
Myself, I longed to try the battle-cast
By night, and use God's vantage to the last,
But sage and prophet, learned in the way
Of seercraft, bade me wait for dawn of day,
And then—leave no Greek living in the land.
They wait not, they, for what my prophets planned
So sagely. In the dark a runaway
Beats a pursuer.
Through our whole array
Send runners! Bid them shake off sleep and wait
Ready with shield and spear. 'Tis not too late
To catch them as they climb on board, and slash
Their crouching shoulders till the gangways splash
With blood, or teach them, fettered leg and arm,
To dig the stiff clods of some Trojan farm.

LEADER.

My Prince, thy words run fast. Nor thou nor I
Have knowledge yet that the Greeks mean to fly.

HECTOR.

What makes them light their beacons? Tell me, what?

LEADER.

God knows! And, for my part, I like it not.

HECTOR.

What, feared? Thou wouldst be feared of everything!

LEADER.

They never lit such light before, O King.

HECTOR.

They never fled, man, in such wild dismay.

LEADER (*yielding*).

'Twas all thy work.—Judge thou, and we obey.

HECTOR.

My word is simple. Arm and face the foe.
[*A sound of marching without.*

LEADER.

Who comes? Aeneas, and in haste, as though
Fraught with some sudden tiding of the night.

Enter AENEAS.

AENEAS.

Hector, what means it? Watchers in affright
Who gather shouting at thy doors, and then
Hold midnight council, shaking all our men?

HECTOR.

To arms, Aeneas! Arm from head to heel!

AENEAS.

What is it? Tidings? Doth the Argive steal
Some march, some ambush in the day's eclipse?

HECTOR.

'Tis flight, man! They are marching to the ships.

AENEAS.

How know'st thou?—Have we proof that it is flight?

HECTOR.

They are burning beacon-fires the livelong night.
They never mean to wait till dawn. Behind
That screen of light they are climbing in the blind
Dark to their ships—unmooring from our coast.

AENEAS (*looking toward the distant fires: after a pause*).

God guide them!—Why then do you arm the host?

HECTOR.

I mean to lame them in their climbing, I
And my good spear, and break them as they fly.
Black shame it were, and folly worse than shame,
To let these spoilers go the road they came
Unpunished, when God gives them to us here.

AENEAS.

Brother, I would thy wit were like thy spear!
But Nature wills not one man should be wise
In all things; each must seek his separate prize.
And thine is battle pure. There comes this word

Of beacons, on the touch thy soul is stirred :
"They fly ! Out horse and chariots !"—Out withal
Past stake and trench, while night hangs like a pall !
Say, when we cross that coiling depth of dyke,
We find the foe not fled, but turned to strike ;
One check there, and all hope of good return
Is gone. How can our men, returning, learn
The tricks of the palisade ? The chariots how
Keep to the bridges on the trenches' brow,
Save with jammed wheels and broken axles ? Aye,
And say thou conquer : other wars yet lie
Before thee. Peleus' son, for all his ire,
Will never let thee touch the ships with fire
Or pounce on his Greek lambs. The man will bide
No wrong and standeth on a tower of pride.
Nay, brother, let the army, head on shield,
Sleep off its long day's labour in the field :
Then, send a spy ; find someone who will dare
Creep to yon Argive camp. Then, if 'tis clear
They mean flight, on and smite them as they fly.
Else, if the beacons hide some strategy,
The spy will read it out, and we can call
A council.—Thus speak I, my general.

CHORUS. [*Strophe.*

'Tis good ! 'Tis wisdom ! Prince, give heed
And change the word thy passion gave.
No soldier loveth, in his need,
The glory of a chief too brave.
A spy is best : a spy, to learn
For what strange work those beacons burn
All night beside the guarded wave.

HECTOR.

Ye all so wish it?—Well, ye conquer me.
(*To* AENEAS) Go thou and calm the allies. There will be
Some stir among them, hearing of these high
And midnight councils.—I will seek the spy
To send to the Greek camp. If there we learn
Of some plot hatching, on the man's return
I straight will call thee and share counsels. So.
But wait attentive. If he says they go
Shipward and plan to escape, one trumpet call
Shall warn thee, and I wait no more, but fall
On camp and hulls, or ever dawn can rise.

AENEAS.

Aye, haste and send him. Now thy plans are wise,
And when need comes I am with thee, sword by sword.
[*Exit* AENEAS.

HECTOR (*turning to the Guards and other soldiers*).

Ye gathered Trojans, sharers of my word,
Who dares to creep through the Greek lines alone?
Who will so help his fatherland?
Doth none
Offer? Must I do everything, one hand
Alone, to save our allies and our land?
[*A lean dark man pushes forward from the back.*

DOLON.

I, Prince!—I offer for our City's sake
To go disguised to the Greek ships, to make
Their counsels mine, and here bring word to thee.
If that be thy full service, I agree.

HECTOR.

Dolon the Wolf! A wise wolf and a true!
Thy father's house was praised when first I knew
Troy: this shall raise it twofold in our eyes.

DOLON.

'Tis wise to do good work, but also wise
To pay the worker. Aye, and fair reward
Makes twofold pleasure, though the work be hard.

HECTOR.

So be it: an honest rule. Do thou lay down
What guerdon likes thee best—short of my crown.

DOLON.

I care not for thy crowned and care-fraught life.

HECTOR.

Wouldst have a daughter of the King to wife?

DOLON.

I seek no mate that might look down on me.

HECTOR.

Good gold is ready, if that tempteth thee.

DOLON.

We live at ease and have no care for gold

HECTOR.

Well, Troy hath other treasures manifold.

DOLON.

Pay me not now, but when the Greeks are ta'en.

HECTOR.

The Greeks! . . . Choose any save the Atridae twain.

DOLON.

Kill both, an it please thee. I make prayer for none.

HECTOR.

Thou wilt not ask for Ajax, Îleus' son?

DOLON.

A princely hand is skilless at the plough.

HECTOR.

'Tis ransom, then? . . . What prisoner cravest thou?

DOLON.

I said before, of gold we have our fill.

HECTOR

For spoils and armour . . . thou shalt choose at will.

DOLON.

Nail them for trophies on some temple wall.

HECTOR.

What seeks the man? What prize more rich than all?

DOLON.

Achilles' horses! [*Murmurs of surprise.*

Yes, I need a great
Prize. I am dicing for my life with Fate.

HECTOR.

'Fore God, I am thy rival, if thy love
Lies there. Undying was the breed thereof,
And these shall never die, who bear to war
Great Peleus' son, swift gleaming like a star.
Poseidon, rider of the wild sea-drift,
Tamed them, men say, and gave them for his gift
To Peleus.—None the less, since I have stirred
Hopes, I will baulk them not. I pledge my word,
Achilles' steeds, a rare prize, shall be thine.

DOLON.

I thank thee.—'Tis indeed a prize more fine
Than all in Troy.—Grudge me not that; there be
Guerdons abundant for a Prince like thee.

[*Exit* HECTOR.

CHORUS. [*Antistr.*

O peril strange, O fearful prize!
Yet win it and thy life hath wings:
A deed of glory in men's eyes,
And greatness, to be wooed of kings.
If God but hearken to the right,
Thou drinkest to the full this night
The cup of man's imaginings.

DOLON.

[*He stands waiting a moment looking out into the dark.*

There lies the way.—But first I must go find
At home some body-shelter to my mind;
Then, forward to the ships of Argolis!

LEADER.

What other raiment wilt thou need than this?

DOLON.

A garb for work, for night; a thieving guise.

LEADER.

'Tis good to learn the wisdoms of the wise.
What will thy wrapping be?

DOLON.

A grey wolf's hide
Shall wrap my body close on either side;
My head shall be the mask of gleaming teeth,
My arms fit in the forepaws, like a sheath,
My thighs in the hinder parts. No Greek shall tell
'Tis not a wolf that walks, half visible,
On four feet by the trenches and around
The ship-screen. When it comes to empty ground
It stands on two.—That is the plan, my friend!

LEADER.

Now Maian Hermes guide thee to thy end
And home safe! Well he loves all counterfeit . . .
Good work is there; may good luck go with it!

DOLON (*to himself, gazing out toward the Greek camp*).

There, and then back! . . . And on this belt shall bleed
Odysseus' head—or why not Diomede?—
To prove my truth. Ere dawn can touch the land
I shall be here, and blood upon my hand.

[*Exit* DOLON.

CHORUS.

Thymbraean, Delian, Birth divine,
That walkest Lycia's inmost shrine,
Come, strong to guard, to guide, to follow,
Come, bow in hand and girt with night,
To help thy Dardans as of old,
When stone by stone thy music rolled—
O conquering Strength, O Sire Apollo!—
Young Ilion into towers of light.

Grant that he reach the shipyard, creep
Keen-eyed through all that host asleep,
Then back to home and hearth, yet living,
Where now his father prays alone:
Yea, grant that, when the Greeks are slain,
Our wolf shall mount with scourge and rein
Those coursers of the sea-god's giving,
Whom Peleus drove in days foregone.

Alone in those Greek ships to stake
His life, for home and country's sake:
'Tis wondrous! Few be hearts so true
When seas across the bulwark break,
And sunlight sickens o'er the crew.
Ah, Phrygia still hath hearts of rock!
The Phrygian spear flies fast and far!
Where shall ye find the fool to mock
Our works in war?

Whom will he stab a-sleeping, whom,
The quick grey wolf, the crawling doom?
Grant that he slay the Spartan! Nay,

Or Agamemnon's head and plume
To Helen bear at dawn of day!
A lightsome dawn to hear her wail
Her brother sworn, her King who came
To Ilion with his thousand sail,
And swords, and flame!

[*As the song ends* DOLON *reappears, in the disguise of a wolf. The Guards gather round him, bidding him godspeed as he crawls off in the dark towards the Greek camp. Meantime from the direction of Mount Ida has entered a* SHEPHERD *who goes to* HECTOR'S *door and calls. The Guards seeing him return to their places.*

SHEPHERD.

Ho, Master!

[*Enter* HECTOR *from tent.*

I would it ofttimes were my luck to share
As goodly news with thee as now I bear.

HECTOR.

What dulness hangs about these shepherds! Block,
Com'st thou to us with tidings of thy flock
Here in the field in arms? Who wants thee here?
Thou know'st my house; thou know'st my father's.
There
Tell all about thy lucky lambs.—Now go.

SHEPHERD.

Dull wits, we shepherds! Aye, 'twas alway so.
Yet still, there is some good news to be told.

HECTOR.

A truce there to thy gossip of the fold!
Our dealings are of war, of sword and spear.
[*He turns to go.*

SHEPHERD.

Aye; so were mine. That is what brought me here.
[HECTOR's *manner changes.*
A chief comes yonder, leading a great band
Of spears, with help to thee and all the land.

HECTOR.

From whence? How do his name and lineage run?

SHEPHERD.

He comes from Thrace, the River Strymon's son.

HECTOR.

Rhesus! Not Rhesus, here on Trojan soil?

SHEPHERD.

Thou hast guessed. That eases me of half my toil.

HECTOR.

What makes he there towards Ida? All astray
Thus from the plain and the broad waggon-way!

SHEPHERD.

I know not rightly, though one well may guess.
'Tis hard to land at night, with such a press
Of spears, on a strange coast, where rumours tell
Of foes through all the plain-land. We that dwell
On Ida, in the rock, Troy's ancient root

And hearth-stone, were well frighted, through the mute
And wolfish thickets thus to hear him break.
A great and rushing noise those Thracians make,
Marching. We, all astonied, ran to drive
Our sheep to the upmost heights. 'Twas some Argive,
We thought, who came to sweep the mountain clear
And waste thy folds; till suddenly our ear
Caught at their speech, and knew 'twas nothing Greek.
Then all our terror fled. I ran to seek
Some scout or pioneer who led the van
And called in Thracian: "Ho, what child of man
Doth lead you? From what nation do ye bring
This host with aid to Ilion and her king?"
He told me what I sought, and there I stood
Watching; and saw one gleaming like a God,
Tall in the darkness on a Thracian car.
A plate of red gold mated, like a bar,
His coursers' necks, white, white as fallen snow.
A carven targe, with golden shapes aglow,
Hung o'er his back. Before each courser's head
A Gorgon, to the frontlet riveted,
With bells set round—like stories that they tell
Of Pallas' shield—made music terrible.
The numbers of that host no pen could write
Nor reckon; 'tis a multitudinous sight,
Long lines of horsemen, lines of targeteers,
Archers abundant; and behind them veers
A wavering horde, light-armed, in Thracian weed.
A friend is come to Ilion in her need
'Gainst whom no Argive, let him fly or stand,
Shall aught avail nor 'scape his conquering hand.

LEADER.

Lo, when the Gods breathe gently o'er a town,
All runs to good, as water-streams run down.

HECTOR (*bitterly*).

Aye, when my spear hath fortune, when God sends
His favour, I shall find abundant friends.
I need them not; who never came of yore
To help us, when we rolled to death before
The war-swell, and the wind had ripped our sail.
Then Rhesus taught us Trojans what avail
His words are.—He comes early to the feast;
Where was he when the hunters met the beast?
Where, when we sank beneath the Argive spear?

LEADER.

Well may'st thou mock and blame thy friend. Yet here
He comes with help for Troy. Accept him thou.

HECTOR.

We are enough, who have held the wall till now.

LEADER.

Master, dost think already that our foe
Is ta'en?

HECTOR.

I do. To-morrow's light will show.

LEADER.

Have care. Fate often flings a backward cast.

HECTOR.

I hate the help that comes when need is past . . .
Howbeit, once come, I bid him welcome here
As guest—not war-friend; guest to share our cheer.
The thanks are lost, he might have won from us.

LEADER.

My general, to reject an ally thus
Must needs make hatred.

SHEPHERD.

The mere sight of those
I saw would sure cast fear upon our foes.

HECTOR (*yielding reluctantly, with a laugh*).

Ah, well; thy words are prudent; and (*To* SHEPHERD) thine eyes
See glorious things. With all these panoplies
Of gold that filled our Shepherd's heart with joy,
Bid Rhesus welcome, as war-friend to Troy.

[*Exit* SHEPHERD; HECTOR *returns to his tent, amid the joy of the soldiers.*

CHORUS.

Now Adrasteia be near and guard
Our lips from sin, lest the end be hard!
But he cometh, he cometh, the Child of the River!
The pride of my heart it shall roll unbarred.

We craved thy coming; yea, need was strong
In the Hall of thy lovers, O child of Song;
Thy mother the Muse and her fair-bridged River
They held thee from us so long, so long!

By Strymon's torrent alone she sang,
And Strymon shivered and coiled and sprang;
And her arms went wide to the wild sweet water,
And the love of the River around her rang.

We hail thee, Fruit of the River's seed,
Young Zeus of the Dawn, on thy starry steed!
O ancient City, O Ida's daughter,
Is God the Deliverer found indeed?

And men shall tell of thee, Ilion mine,
Once more a-harping at day's decline,
'Mid laughing of lovers and lays and dances
And challenge on challenge of circling wine?

When the Greek is smitten that day shall be,
And fled to Argolis over the sea:
O mighty of hand, O leader of lances,
Smite him, and heaven be good to thee!

Thou Rider golden and swift and sheer,
Achilles falters: appear! appear!
The car like flame where the red shield leapeth,
The fell white steeds and the burning spear!

No Greek shall boast he hath seen thy face
And danced again in the dancing place;
And the land shall laugh for the sheaves she reapeth,
Of spoilers dead by a sword from Thrace.

Enter RHESUS *in dazzling white armour, followed by his* CHARIOTEER *and Attendants. The* CHARIOTEER *carries his golden shield. The* CHORUS *break into a shout of "All Hail!"*

LEADER.

All hail, great King! A whelp indeed
Is born in Thracia's lion fold,
Whose leap shall make strong cities bleed.
Behold his body girt with gold,
And hark the pride of bells along
The frontlet of that targe's hold.

CHORUS.

A God, O Troy, a God and more!
'Tis Ares' self, this issue strong
Of Strymon and the Muse of song,
Whose breath is fragrant on thy shore!

Re-enter HECTOR.

RHESUS.

Lord Hector, Prince of Ilion, noble son
Of noble sires, all hail! Long years have run
Since last we greeted, and 'tis joy this day
To see thy fortunes firm and thine array
Camped at the foe's gate. Here am I to tame
That foe for thee, and wrap his ships in flame.

HECTOR.

Thou child of Music and the Thracian flood,
Strymonian Rhesus, truth is alway good
In Hector's eyes. I wear no double heart.

Long, long ago thou shouldst have borne thy part
In Ilion's labours, not have left us here,
For all thy help, to sink beneath the spear.
Why didst thou—not for lack of need made plain!—
Not come, not send, not think of us again?
What grave ambassadors prayed not before
Thy throne, what herald knelt not at thy door?
What pride of gifts did Troy not send to thee?
And thou, a lord of Barbary even as we,
Thou, brother of our blood, like one at sup
Who quaffs his fill and flings away the cup,
Hast flung to the Greeks my city! Yet, long since,
'Twas I that found thee but a little prince
And made thee mighty, I and this right hand;
When round Pangaion and the Paiôn's land,
Front against front, I burst upon the brood
Of Thrace and broke their targes, and subdued
Their power to thine. The grace whereof, not small,
Thou hast spurned, and when thy kinsmen, drowning, call,
Comest too late. Thou! Others there have been
These long years, not by nature of our kin . . .
Some under yon rough barrows thou canst see
Lie buried; they were true to Troy and me;
And others, yet here in the shielded line
Or mid the chariots, parching in the shine
Of noonday, starving in the winds that bite
Through Ilion's winter, still endure and fight
On at my side. 'Twas not their way, to lie
On a soft couch and, while the cups go by,
Pledge my good health, like thee, in Thracian wine.
I speak as a free man. With thee and thine
Hector is wroth, and tells thee to thy face.

RHESUS.

Thy way is mine, friend. Straight I run my race
In word and deed, and bear no double tongue.
I tell thee, more than thine my heart was wrung,
Yea, angered past all durance, thus to stay
Back from thy battles. 'Twas a folk that lay
Hard on my borders, Scythians of the north;
Just when my host for Troy had started forth,
They fell upon our homes. I had reached the coast
Of the Friendless Sea and purposed to have crossed
My Thracians there. We turned; and all that plain
Is trampled in a mire of Scythian slain
Ploughed by our spears, and blood of Thrace withal
Not stinted. This it was that drowned thy call
For help and held me back from Ilion's need.
I broke their power; the princes of their breed
I took to hostage, made their elders swear
To bring my house due tribute, year by year,
Then, never lagging, crossed the Pontus mouth,
Marched by long stages through Bithynia south
And here am come . . . not drunken with the feast,
As thou wouldst have me be, not lulled to rest
In golden chambers. In this harness hard
I have borne my nights of winter storm that starred
The Euxine into ice and scared the strong
Paionians.
Long I have been, but not too long
To save thee yet. Friend, this is the tenth year
Thou labourest on unceasing, with no clear
Vantage; day creeps by day, and Ares throws
The same red dice for thee and for thy foes.
Now, hear my vow. Before one day's eclipse
I swear to break their wall, to burn their ships

And slay their princes. On the second day
I leave this soil and take my homeward way,
Thy pains relieved. No Trojan of the land
Need move, nor turn the buckler in his hand.
Alone my late-comers will turn the tide
And smite your Greeks, for all their bitter pride.

CHORUS.

[*The Trojan soldiers, who have been listening with delight, here break out in irrepressible applause.*

All hail!
Sweet words and faithful heart!
Only may Zeus avert
From those proud lips the Wrath that none may bear!
Never a galleon bore,
Now, nor in days of yore,
Prince like to thee, so valiant and so fair.
How shall Achilles, how
Shall Ajax bear him now,
Or face thy lance? May I but stand that day
Watching to see him reel
Broken beneath thy steel,
And once in blood his many murders pay!

RHESUS.

Yea, more atonement thou shalt take from me
For this slow help.—May Adrasteia see
My heart and pardon!—When we two have set
Troy free from these who compass her with hate,
Soon as the Gods have had their first-fruits, I
With thee will sail—so help me Zeus on high!—
And sack all Hellas with the sword, till these
Doers of deeds shall know what suffering is.

HECTOR.

By heaven, could I once see this peril rolled
Past us, and live in Ilion as of old,
Untrembling, I would thank my gods! To seek
Argos and sack the cities of the Greek—
'Twere not such light work as thou fanciest.

RHESUS.

These Greeks that face thee, are they not their best?

HECTOR.

We seek not better. These do all we need.

RHESUS.

When these are beaten, then, we have done the deed.

HECTOR.

Lose not thy path watching a distant view.

RHESUS.

Thou seem'st content to suffer, not to do?

HECTOR.

I have a kingdom large by mine own right. . . .

What station will best please thee in this fight
To ground the targe and stablish thine array?
Right, left, or midmost in the allies? Say.

RHESUS.

'Twould please me best to fight these Greeks alone.
Yet, if 'twould irk thine honour not to have thrown
One firebrand on the ships with me, why, then
Set us to face Achilles and his men.

HECTOR.

Achilles? Nay, his spear ye cannot meet.

RHESUS.

How so? Fame said he sailed here with the fleet.

HECTOR.

He sailed, and he is here. But some despite
'Gainst the great King now keeps him from the fight.

RHESUS.

Who next to him hath honour in their host?

HECTOR.

Next, to my seeming, Ajax hath the most,
Or Diomede.—But Odysseus is a tough
And subtle fox, and brave; aye, brave enough.
No man of them hath harmed us more than he.
He climbed here to Athena's sanctuary
One night, and stole her image clean away
To the Argive ships. Yes, and another day,
Guised as a wandering priest, in rags, he came
And walked straight through the Gates, made loud acclaim
Of curses on the Greek, spied out alone
All that he sought in Ilion, and was gone—
Gone, and the watch and helpers of the Gate
Dead! And in every ambush they have set
By the old Altar, close to Troy, we know
He sits—a murderous reptile of a foe!

RHESUS.

No brave man seeks so dastardly to harm
His battle-foes; he meets them arm to arm.
This Greek of thine, this sitter like a thief
In ambush, I will make of him my chief
Care. I will take him living, drive a straight
Stake through him, and so star him at the Gate
To feed your wide-winged vultures. 'Tis the death
Most meet for a lewd thief, who pillageth
God's sanctuary, or so we hold in Thrace.

HECTOR (*making no answer*).

Seek first some sleep. There still remains a space
Of darkness.—I will show the spot that best
May suit you, somewhat sundered from the rest.
Should need arise, the password of the night
Is Phoebus: see your Thracians have it right.
[*Turning to the Guards before he goes.*
Advance beyond your stations, men, at some
Distance, and stay on watch till Dolon come
With word of the Argives' counsel. If his vow
Prosper, he should be nearing us by now.
[*Exeunt* HECTOR *and* RHESUS *and Attendants.*
The Guards, who have been below, come forward sleepily from the camp fire, and sit watching by HECTOR'S *tent.*

CHORUS.

Say, whose is the watch? Who exchanges
With us? The first planets to rise

Are setting ; the Pleiades seven
Move low on the margin of heaven,
And the Eagle is risen and ranges
The mid-vault of the skies.

ANOTHER.

No sleeping yet ! Up from your couches
And watch on, the sluggards ye are !
The moon-maiden's lamp is yet burning.

THIRD GUARD.

Oh, the morning is near us, the morning !
Even now his fore-runner approaches,
Yon dim-shining star.

DIVERS GUARDS (*talking*).

Who drew the first night-watch ?

ANOTHER.

'Twas one
Koroibos, called the Mygdon's Son.

THE GUARD.

And after ?

THE OTHER.

The Mount Taurus men
Had second watch : from them again
The Mysians took it. We came then.

A GUARD.

'Tis surely time. Who will go tell
The fifth watch ? 'Tis the Lycians' spell
By now ; 'twas thus the portions fell.

ANOTHER.

Nay, hearken! Again she is crying
Where death-laden Simoïs falls,
Of the face of dead Itys that stunned her,
Of grief grown to music and wonder:
Most changeful and old and undying
The nightingale calls.

ANOTHER.

And on Ida the shepherds are waking
Their flocks for the upland. I hear
The skirl of a pipe very distant.

ANOTHER.

And sleep, it falls slow and insistent.
'Tis perilous sweet when the breaking
Of dawn is so near.

DIVERS GUARDS (*talking*).

Why have we still no word nor sign
Of that scout in the Argive line?

ANOTHER.

I know not; he is long delayed.

ANOTHER.

God send he trip not on the blade
Of some Greek in an ambuscade!

ANOTHER.

It may be. I am half afraid.

LEADER.

Our time is past! Up, men, and tell
The fifth watch. 'Tis the Lycians' spell
Now, as the portions fairly fell.

[*The Guards pass out to waken the Lycians. The stage is empty and dark except for the firelight, when a whisper is heard at the back. Presently enter* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDE *in dull leather armour,* DIOMEDE *carrying at his belt* DOLON's *wolf-skin and mask.*

ODYSSEUS.

Diomede, hist!—A little sound of arms
Clanking. . . or am I full of void alarms?

DIOMEDE.

No. 'Tis some horse tied to the chariot rail
That clanks his chain.—My heart began to fail
A moment, till I heard the horse's champ.

[*They steal on further, keeping in the shadow.*

ODYSSEUS.

Mind—in that shade—the watchers of the camp.

DIOMEDE.

I keep in shadow, but I am staring hard.

ODYSSEUS.

Thou know'st the watchword, if we stir some guard?

DIOMEDE.

Phoebus. 'Twas the last sign that Dolon gave.

[*They creep forward in silence to the entrance of* HECTOR'S *tent.*

ODYSSEUS.

Now, forward!

[*They dash into the tent, swords drawn; then return.*

God! All empty as the grave!

DIOMEDE.

Yet Dolon told us Hector's couch was made
Just here. For none but him I drew this blade.

ODYSSEUS.

What means it? To some ambush is he gone?

DIOMEDE.

Maybe, to work some craft on us at dawn.

ODYSSEUS.

He is hot with courage when he is winning, hot.

DIOMEDE.

What must we do, Odysseus?—He was not
Laid where we thought him, and our hopes are lost.

ODYSSEUS.

Back to our own ship-rampart at all cost!
The God who gave him victory saves him still.
We cannot force Fortune against her will.

DIOMEDE.

Could we not find Aeneas? Or the bed
Of Paris the accurst, and have his head?

ODYSSEUS.

Go by night searching through these lines of men
For chiefs to kill? 'Twere death and death again.

DIOMEDE.

But to go empty back—what shame 'twill be!—
And not one blow struck home at the enemy!

ODYSSEUS.

How not one blow? Did we not baulk and kill
Dolon, their spy, and bear his tokens still?
Dost think the whole camp should be thine to quell?

[DIOMEDE *takes* DOLON'S *wolf-mask off his belt and hangs it in* HECTOR'S *tent, then turns.*

DIOMEDE.

Good. Now for home! And may the end be well!

[*As they turn there appears at the back a luminous and gigantic shape, the Goddess* ATHENA.

ATHENA.

What make ye, from these sleepers thus to part
Desponding and with sorrow-wounded heart
If Hector be not granted you to slay
Nor Paris? Little know ye what great stay

Of help is found for Troy. This very night
Rhesus is come; who, if he see the light
Of morning, not Achilles nor the rack
Of Ajax' spear hath power to hold him back,
Ere wall and gate be shattered and inside
Your camp a spear-swept causeway builded wide
To where beached galleys flame above the dead.
Him slay, and all is won. Let Hector's head
Sleep where it lies and draw unvexèd breath;
Another's work, not thine, is Hector's death.

ODYSSEUS.

Most high Athena, well I know the sound
Of that immortal voice. 'Tis ever found
My helper in great perils.—Where doth lie
Rhesus, mid all this host of Barbary?

ATHENA.

Full near he lies, not mingled with the host
Of Troy, but here beyond the lines—a post
Of quiet till the dawn, that Hector found.
And near him, by his Thracian chariot bound,
Two snow-white coursers gleam against the wan
Moon, like the white wing of a river swan.
Their master slain, take these to thine own hearth,
A wondrous spoil; there hides not upon earth
A chariot-team of war so swift and fair.

ODYSSEUS.

Say, Diomede, wilt make the men thy share,
Or catch the steeds and leave the fight to me?

DIOMEDE.

I take the killing, thou the stablery :
It needs keen wit and a neat hand. The post
A man should take is where he helpeth most.

ATHENA.

Behold, 'tis Paris, hasting there toward
This tent. Methinks he knoweth from the guard
Some noise of prowling Argives hither blown.

DIOMEDE.

Comes he alone or with his guards?

ATHENA.

Alone ;
Toward Hector's quarters, as I deem, he plies
His message. He hath heard some tale of spies.

DIOMEDE.

Then he shall be the first dead Trojan !

ATHENA.

No ;
Beyond the ordainèd end thou canst not go.
Fate hath not willed that Paris by thy deed
Shall die ; it is another who must bleed
To-night. Therefore be swift !

[*Exeunt* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDE.

For me, my guise
Shall melt and change in Alexander's eyes,
Yea, till he dream 'tis Cypris, his delight
And help in need, that meets him in the night,

And soft shall be my words to him I hate.
So speak I; but on whom my spell is set
He hears not, sees not, though so near I stand.
[*She becomes invisible where she stands.*

Enter PARIS.

PARIS.

Ho, Hector! Brother! General of the land!
Sleepest thou still? We need thy waking sight.
Our guards have marked some prowler of the night,
We know not if a mere thief or a spy.
[ATHENA *becomes visible again, but seems changed and her voice softer.*

ATHENA.

Have comfort thou! Doth not the Cyprian's eye
Mark all thy peril and keep watch above
Thy battles? How shall I forget the love
I owe thee, and thy faithful offices?
To crown this day and all its victories,
Lo, I have guided here to Troy a strong
Helper, the scion of the Muse of song
And Strymon's flood, the crownèd stream of Thrace.

PARIS (*standing like one in a dream*).

Indeed thy love is steadfast, and thy grace
Bounteous to Troy and me. Thou art the joy
And jewel of my days, which I to Troy
Have brought, and made thee hers.—O Cyprian,
I heard, not clearly,—'twas some talk that ran
Among the pickets—spies had passed some spot
Close by the camp. The men who saw them not

Talk much, and they who saw, or might have seen,
Can give no sign nor token. It had been
My purpose to find Hector where he lay.

ATHENA.

Fear nothing. All is well in Troy's array.
Hector is gone to help those Thracians sleep.

PARIS.

Thy word doth rule me, Goddess. Yea, so deep
My trust is, that all thought of fear is lost
In comfort, and I turn me to my post.

ATHENA.

Go And remember that thy fortunes still
Are watched by me, and they who do my will
Prosper in all their ways. Aye, thou shalt prove
Ere long, if I can care for those I love.

[*Exit* PARIS. *She raises her voice.*

Back, back, ye twain! Are ye in love with death?
Laertes' son, thy sword into the sheath!
Our golden Thracian gaspeth in his blood;
The steeds are ours; the foe hath understood
And crowds against you. Haste ye! haste to fly,—
Ere yet the lightning falleth, and ye die!

[ATHENA *vanishes; a noise of tumult is heard.*

Enter a crowd of Thracians running in confusion, in the midst of them ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDE.

VOICES (*amid the tumult*).

Ha! Ha!—At them! At them! After them! Down with them!—Where are they?

CAPTAIN.

Who is that fellow? Look! That yonder!

A MAN.

Rascal thieves, the sort that crawl
And vex an army in the dark!

CAPTAIN.

Ho, this way! Follow! This way all!
[*They pursue* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDE; *catch them and bring them back.*

A MAN.

I have them! I have caught them!

CAPTAIN (*to* ODYSSEUS)

Whence comest thou? What art thou? Say; what captain and what company?

ODYSSEUS (*indignantly*).

'Tis not for thee to know. This day thou diest for thy knavery!

CAPTAIN.

Stop! Give the watchword quick, before I have thy body on my pike.

ODYSSEUS (*in a tone of authority*)

Halt every man and have no fear!

CAPTAIN.

Come, gather round. Be quick to strike.

ODYSSEUS (*to* CAPTAIN).

'Twas thou that killed King Rhesus!

CAPTAIN.

No: 'tis I that kill the man that killed . . .
[*Flies at* ODYSSEUS, *but other men hold him back.*

ODYSSEUS.

Hold back all!

VOICES.

No more holding back!

ODYSSEUS (*as they attack him*).

What, strike an ally in the field?

CAPTAIN.

Then give the watchword!

ODYSSEUS.

Phoebus.

CAPTAIN.

Right. Ho, every man hold back his spear!—
Then know'st thou where the men are gone?

ODYSSEUS.

We saw them running, somewhere here.
[*He makes off into the darkness.* DIOMEDE *follows, and some Thracians.*

CAPTAIN.

Off every one upon their track!

A MAN.

Or should we rouse the army?

CAPTAIN.

No;
To stir the allies in the night and make more panic!
Let us go.

[*The Thracians go off in pursuit. Meantime the original Guards who form the Chorus have hastened back. The two Greeks are presently seen crossing at the back in a different direction.*

CHORUS.

Who was the man that passed?
Who, that, so madly bold,
Even as I held him fast,
Laughed, and I loosed my hold?
Where shall I find him now?
What shall I deem of him,
To steal thro' the guards a-row,
Quaking not, eye nor limb,
On thro' the starlight dim?
Is he of Thessaly,
Born by the Locrian sea,
Or harvester of some starved island's corn?
What man hath seen his face?
What was his name or race,
What the high God by whom his sires have sworn?

DIVERS GUARDS (*talking*).

This night must be Odysseus' work, or whose?—
Odysseus? Aye, to judge by ancient use.—
Odysseus surely!—That is thy belief?—
What else? It seems he hath no fear
Of such as we!—Whom praise ye there?
Whose prowess? Say!—Odysseus.—Nay,
Praise not the secret stabbing of a thief!

CHORUS.

He came once, of old,
Up thro' the city throng,
Foam on his lips, a-cold,
Huddled in rags that hung
Covering just the sword
Hid in his mantle's pleat;
His face grimed and scored,
A priest of wandering feet,
Who begged his bread in the street.
Many and evil things
He cast on the brother kings
Like one long hurt, who nurseth anger sore;
Would that a curse, yea, would
The uttermost wrath of God
Had held those feet from walking Ilion's shore!

DIVERS GUARDS (*talking*).

Odysseus or another, 'tis the guard
Will weep for this. Aye, Hector will be hard.—
What will he say?—He will suspect.—Suspect?

What evil? What should make you fear?—
'Twas we that left a passage clear.—
A passage?—Yea, for these men's way,
Who came by night into the lines unchecked.

[*A sound of moaning outside in the darkness, which has been heard during the last few lines, now grows into articulate words.*

VOICE.

Woe, woe!
The burden of the wrath of fate!

GUARDS.

Ha, listen! Wait.
Crouch on the ground; it may be yet
Our man is drawing to the net.

VOICE.

Woe, woe!
The burden of the hills of Thrace!

LEADER.

An ally? None of Hellene race.

VOICE.

Woe, woe!
Yea, woe to me and woe to thee,
My master! Once to set thine eye
On Ilion the accurst, and die!

LEADER (*calling aloud*).

Ho there! What ally passes? The dim night
Blurreth mine eyes; I cannot see thee right.

VOICE.

Ho, some one of the Trojan name!
Where sleeps your king beneath his shield,
Hector? What marshal of the field
Will hear our tale . . . the men who came
And struck us and were gone; and we,
We woke and there was nought to see,
But our own misery.

LEADER.

I cannot hear him right; it sounds as if
The Thracians were surprised or in some grief.

[*There enters a wounded man, walking with difficulty; he is the Thracian Charioteer who came with* RHESUS.

THRACIAN.

The army lost and the king slain,
Stabbed in the dark! Ah, pain! pain!
This deep raw wound . . . Oh, let me die
By thy side, Master, by thy side!
In shame together let us lie
Who came to save, and failed and died.

LEADER.

This needs no surmise: 'tis disaster plain
That comes. He speaketh of some ally slain.

THRACIAN.

Disaster, yea: and with disaster shame,
Which lights Disaster to a twofold flame

Of evil. For to die in soldier's wise,
Since die we needs must . . . though the man who dies
Hath pain . . . to all his house 'tis praise and pride;
But we, like laggards and like fools we died!
When Hector's hand had showed us where to rest
And told the watchword, down we lay, oppressed
With weariness of that long march, and slept
Just as we fell. No further watch was kept,
Our arms not laid beside us; by the horse
No yoke nor harness ordered. Hector's force
Had victory, so my master heard, and lay
Secure, just waiting for the dawn of day
To attack. So thought we all, and our lines broke
And slept. After a little time I woke,
Thinking about my horses, that the morn
Must see them yoked for war. I found the corn
And gave them plenteously. Then in the deep
Shadow I saw two men who seemed to creep
Close by our line, but swiftly, as I stirred,
Crouched and were seeking to make off unheard.
I shouted then, and bade them keep away:
Two thieves, I thought, from the great host that lay
Round us. They never answered, and, for me,
I said no more but turned and presently
Was sleeping. In my sleep there came a dream.
I seemed to see the horses—mine own team
I had trained long since and drove at Rhesus' side—
But wolves were on their backs, wolves, couched astride,
Who drove and scourged; I saw the horses rear
And stagger with wide nostrils, stiff with fear,
And, starting up to drive the beasts away,

I woke.—A terror of great darkness lay
About me, but I lifted up my head
And listened. There was moaning, like the dead
That moan at night, and over me there flowed,
So soft, so warm—it was my master's blood,
Who writhed beside me, dying! With a bound
I sprang up, empty-handed, groping round
For spear or sword, when, lo, a young strong man
Was close to me and slashed, and the sword ran
Deep through my flank. I felt its passage well,
So deep, so wide, so spreading . . . then I fell.
And they, they got the bridles in their hand
And fled. . . . Ah! Ah! This pain. I cannot stand.

[*The Guards catch him as he reels, and lay him on the ground.*

I know, I saw, thus much. But why or how
Those dead men went to death I cannot know,
Nor by whose work. But this I say; God send
'Tis not foul wrong wrought on us by a friend.

LEADER.

Good charioteer of that ill-fortuned king,
Suspect us not. 'Tis Greeks have done this thing.
But yonder Hector comes. He hath been shown
The foul deed, and thy sorrows are his own.

Enter HECTOR *in wrath, with a band of Guards.*

HECTOR.

Ye workers of amazement! Have your eyes
No sight? Ye watch and let these Argive spies

Pass—and our friends are butchered in their sleep—
And then pass back unwounded, laughing deep
Amid the galleys at the news they bring
Of Trojan sluggards and the fool their king?
Great God, ye never baulked them as they came,
Nor smote them as they went!

[*His eye falls on the* CAPTAIN.
Who bears the blame
Of this but thou? Thou wast the watcher set
To guard this host till morn. I tell thee yet
For this deed—I have sworn by Zeus our Lord!—
The scourge of torment or the headsman's sword
Awaits thee. Else, be Hector in your thought
Writ down a babbler and a man of nought.

LEADER (*grovelling before* HECTOR).

Woe, woe! It was for thee, only for thee,
I must have gone, O Help and Majesty,
That time with message that the fires were burning.
Mine eye was keen; I swear by Simoïs river,
It never drooped nor slumbered, never, never,
From eve till morning!
My master, verily, I am innocent utterly,
Build not such wrath against me, Lord, nor harden
Thy heart; let Time be judge; and if in deed
Or word I have offended, let me bleed!
Bury me here alive! I ask no pardon.

[HECTOR *is standing over him ready to strike when the* CHARIOTEER *speaks.*

THRACIAN.

Why threaten them? Art thou a Greek to blind
My barbarous wit so nimbly, in a wind

Of words? This work was thine. And no man's head
Is asked by us, the wounded and the dead,
Save thine. It needs more play, and better feigned,
To hide from me that thou hast slain thy friend
By craft, to steal his horses.—That is why
He stabs his friends. He prays them earnestly,
Prays them to come; they came and they are dead
A cleaner man was Paris, when he fled
With his host's wife. He was no murderer.
Profess not thou that any Greek was there
To fall on us. What Greek could pass the screen
Of Trojan posts in front of us, unseen?
Thyself was stationed there, and all thy men.
What man of yours was slain or wounded when
Your Greek spies came? Not one; 'tis we, behind,
Are wounded, and some worse than wounded, blind
Forever to the sunlight. When we seek
Our vengeance, we shall go not to the Greek.
What stranger in that darkness could have trod
Straight to where Rhesus lay—unless some God
Pointed his path? They knew not, whispered not,
Rhesus had ever come. . . . 'Tis all a plot.

HECTOR (*steadied and courteous again*).

Good allies I have had since first the Greek
Set foot in Troy, and never heard them speak
Complaint of Hector. Thou wilt be the first.
I have not, by God's mercy, such a thirst
For horses as to murder for their sake.
[*He turns to his own men.*
Odysseus! Yet again Odysseus! Take
All the Greek armies, is there one but he

Could have devised, or dared, this devilry?
I fear him; yea, fear in mine own despite,
Lest Dolon may have crossed him in the night
And perished; 'tis so long he cometh not.

THRACIAN.

I know not who Odysseus is, nor what.
I know it was no Greek that wounded us.

HECTOR.

To think thus pleasures thee? Well, have it thus.

THRACIAN.

Home, home! To die at home and rest my head!

HECTOR.

Nay, die not, friend. We have enough of dead.

THRACIAN.

How can I live? Lost, and my master slain.

HECTOR.

My house will shelter thee and heal thy pain.

THRACIAN.

Thy house? Will murderers' nursing give me peace?

HECTOR.

Still the same tale! This man will never cease.

THRACIAN.

My curse rest—not on Hector, but on those
Who stabbed us, as thou say'st.—Ah, Justice knows!

HECTOR.

There, lift him.—Bear him to my house. Take pains,
If care can do it, that the man complains
No more of Troy.—Ye others, bear withal
To Priam and the Elders of the Wall
My charge, that, where the cart-road from the plain
Branches, they make due burial for our slain.

[*One party of Guards lifts carefully the wounded* THRACIAN *and goes off bearing him : another departs with the message to Troy.*

CHORUS.

Back from the heights of happiness,
Back, back, to labour and distress
Some god that is not ours doth lead
Troy and her sons ; He sows the seed,
Who knows the reaping ?

[*In the air at the back there appears a Vision of the* MUSE *holding the body of her dead son* RHESUS.

Ah ! Ah !
My king, what cometh ? There appears
Some Spirit, like a mist of tears ;
And in her arms a man lieth,
So young, so wearied unto death ;
To see such vision presageth
Wrath and great weeping.

[*The Guards hide their heads in their mantles.*

MUSE.

Nay, look your fill, ye Trojans. It is I,
The many-sistered Muse, of worship high

In wise men's hearts, who come to mourn mine own
Most pitifully loved, most injured, son,
For whose shed blood Odysseus yet shall pay
Vengeance, who crawled and stabbed him where he lay.

With a dirge of the Thracian mountains,
I mourn for thee, O my son.
For a mother's weeping, for a galley's launching, for the way to Troy;
A sad going, and watched by spirits of evil.
His mother chid him to stay, but he rose and went.
His father besought him to stay, but he went in anger.
Ah, woe is me for thee, thou dear face,
My belovèd and my son!

LEADER.

Goddess, if tears for such as thee may run
In our low eyes, I weep for thy dead son.

MUSE.

I say to thee: Curse Odysseus,
And cursèd be Diomede!
For they made me childless, and forlorn for ever, of the flower of sons.
Yea, curse Helen, who left the houses of Hellas.
She knew her lover, she feared not the ships and sea.
She called thee, called thee, to die for the sake of Paris,
Belovèd, and a thousand cities
She made empty of good men.

O conquered Thamyris, is this thy bane
Returned from death to pierce my heart again?
Thy pride it was, and bitter challenge cast
'Gainst all the Muses, did my flesh abase
To bearing of this Child, what time I passed
Through the deep stream and looked on Strymon's face,
And felt his great arms clasp me, when to old
Pangaion and the earth of hoarded gold
We Sisters came with lutes and psalteries,
Provoked to meet in bitter strife of song
That mountain wizard, and made dark the eyes
Of Thamyris, who wrought sweet music wrong.
I bore thee, Child; and then, in shame before
My sisterhood, my dear virginity,
I stood again upon thy Father's shore
And cast thee to the deeps of him; and he
Received and to no mortal nursing gave
His child, but to the Maidens of the Wave.
And well they nursed thee, and a king thou wast
And first of Thrace in war; yea, far and near
Through thine own hills thy bloody chariot passed,
Thy battered helm flashed, and I had no fear;
Only to Troy I charged thee not to go:
I knew the fated end: but Hector's cry,
Borne overseas by embassies of woe,
Called thee to battle for thy friends and die.

And thou, Athena—nothing was the deed
Odysseus wrought this night nor Diomede—
'Tis thine, all thine; dream not thy cruel hand
Is hid from me! Yet ever on thy land
The Muse hath smiled; we gave it praise above

All cities, yea, fulfilled it with our love.
The light of thy great Mysteries was shed
By Orpheus, very cousin of this dead
Whom thou hast slain ; and thine high citizen
Musaeus, wisest of the tribes of men,
We and Apollo guided all his way :
For which long love behold the gift ye pay !
I wreathe him in my arms ; I wail his wrong
Alone, and ask no other mourner's song.

[*She weeps over* RHESUS.

LEADER.

Hector, thou hearest. We were guiltless here,
And falsely spake that Thracian charioteer.

HECTOR.

Always I knew it. Had we any need
Of seers to tell this was Odysseus' deed ?
For me, what could I else, when I beheld
The hosts of Argos camped upon this field,
What but with prayers and heralds bid my friend
Come forth and fight for Ilion ere the end ?
He owed me that.—Yet, now my friend is slain,
His sorrow is my sorrow. On this plain
I will uplift a wondrous sepulchre,
And burn about it gifts beyond compare
Of robes and frankincense. To Troy's relief
He came in love and parteth in great grief.

MUSE.

My son shall not be laid in any grave
Of darkness ; thus much guerdon will I crave

Of Death's eternal bride, the heavenly-born
Maid of Demeter, Life of fruits and corn,
To set this one soul free. She owes me yet,
For Orpheus widowed, an abiding debt.
To me he still must be—that know I well—
As one in death, who sees not. Where I dwell
He must not come, nor see his mother's face.
Alone for ever, in a caverned place
Of silver-veinèd earth, hid from men's sight,
A Man yet Spirit, he shall live in light:
As under far Pangaion Orpheus lies,
Priest of great light and worshipped of the wise.
Howbeit an easier anguish even to me
Falls than to Thetis in her azure sea;
For her son too shall die; and sorrowing,
First on the hills our band for thee shall sing,
Then for Achilles by the weeping wave.
Pallas could murder thee, but shall not save
Thy foe; too swift Apollo's bolt shall fly.
O fleshly loves of sad mortality,
O bitter motherhood of these that die,
She that hath wisdom will endure her doom,
The days of emptiness, the fruitless womb;
Not love, not bear love's children to the tomb.

[*The* Vision *rises through the air and vanishes.*

Leader.

The dead man sleepeth in his mother's care;
But we who battle still—behold, the glare
Of dawn that rises. Doth thy purpose hold,
Hector, our arms are ready as of old.

HECTOR.

March on ; and bid the allies with all speed
Be armed, bind fast the yoke upon the steed,
Then wait with torches burning, till we sound
The Tuscan trump.—This day we shall confound,
God tells me, their Greek phalanx, break their high
Rampart and fire the galleys where they lie.
[*Pointing to the dawn.*
Yon first red arrow of the Sun, that brings
The dawn to Troy, hath freedom on his wings.

During the following lines HECTOR *goes to his tent to get his shield, and as he enters sees* DOLON'S *bloody wolf-skin hanging. He takes it, looks at it, and throws it down without a word. Then he puts on his helmet, takes his shield and spear, and follows the Guards as they march off.*

CHORUS.

The Chief hath spoken : let his will
Be law, ye Trojans.—Raise the cry
To Arms ! To Arms ! and down the line
Of allies pass the battle-sign.
The God of Ilion liveth still ;
And men may conquer ere they die.
[*Exeunt.*

NOTES

THE play presupposes a knowledge of the Iliad in some form, if not exactly in the form which it now wears. We are not only supposed to know that Hector, son of Priam, leads the Trojans and their allies ("Trojans, and Lycians, and Dardans bold": in tragedy they are also called Phrygians) in defence against the Greeks—Argives, Achaeans, Hellênes—under Agamemnon, king of men, and his brother Menelaüs, husband of Helen. This sort of supposition is usual in all Greek tragedy. It merely means that the poet takes for granted the main outlines of the heroic saga. But in this play we are also supposed to take up the story as it stands at the opening of the Doloneia or Tenth Book of the Iliad. Indeed one might almost say that the *Rhesus* is simply the Doloneia turned into drama and set in the Trojan camp. The only other play that is taken straight from Homer is the Satyr-play, *Cyclops*, which tells the story of Odyssey IX., but it is likely enough that if we possessed more of the earlier epic literature we should find many other plays closely hugging their traditional sources.—The Trojans are camping out on the field of battle, close to the Greek lines. Hector, always ready for danger, seems to have his tent or log-hut set up quite in the van, just behind the outposts. In Il. X. 415 ff. he is holding counsel

with the other chieftains " away from the throng "; the allies are taking their sleep and trusting to the Trojans, who keep awake in groups round the camp fires; no watchword is mentioned.

P. 5, l. 30, The priest.]—He would be needed to make the sacrifice before battle.

P. 5, l. 36, The lash of trembling Pan.]—*i.e.*, a panic.

P. 5, l. 41, Great beacons in the Argive line.]—In the Iliad it is the Trojan watch-fires that are specially mentioned, especially VIII. 553–end. There is no great disturbance in the Greek camp in the Doloneia; there is a gathering of the principal chiefs, a visit to the Guards, and the despatch of the two spies, but no general tumult such as there is in Book II. One cannot help wondering whether our playwright found in his version of the Doloneia a description of fires in the Greek camp, such as our Eighth Book has of those in the Trojan camp. The object might be merely protection against a night attack, or it might be a wish to fly, as Hector thinks. If so, presumably the Assembly changed its mind—much as it does in our Book II.—and determined to send spies.

P. 5, l. 43 ff., The shipyard timbers.]—The Greeks had their ships drawn up on the beach and protected by some sort of wooden "shipyard"; then came the camp; then, outside the whole, a trench and a wall. The fires were in the camp.

P. 8, l. 105, Brother! I would thy wit were like thy spear!]—In Homer Hector is impulsive and over-daring, but still good in counsel. On the stage every quality that is characteristic is apt to be over-

emphasized, all that is not characteristic neglected. Hence on the Attic stage Odysseus is more crafty, Ajax and Diomedes more blunt, Menelaus more unwarlike and more uxorious than in Homer.

This speech of Aeneas, though not inapposite, is rather didactic—a fault which always remained a danger to Euripides.

P. 10, l. 150 ff., Dolon.]—The name is derived from *dolos*, "craft." In our version of Homer Dolon merely wears, over his tunic, the skin of a grey wolf. He has a leather cap and a bow. In the play he goes, as Red Indian spies used to go, actually disguised as a wolf, on all fours in a complete wolf-skin. The same version is found on the Munich cylix of the early vase-painter Euphronius (about 500 B.C.), in which Dolon wears a tight-fitting hairy skin with a long tail. The plan can of course only succeed in a country where wild animals are common enough to be thought unimportant. The playwright has evidently chosen a more primitive and romantic version of the story; the Homeric reviser has, as usual, cut out what might seem ridiculous. (See J. A. K. Thomson in *Classical Review*, xxv. pp. 238 f.)

P. 12, l. 175, Ajax, Îleus' son.]—"Ajax" is mentioned here and at ll. 463, 497, 601, as apparently next in importance to the two Atreidae or to Achilles. That is natural, but it is a shock to have him here described as son of Ileus. In the Iliad we should have had "Ajax son of Telamon." The son of Ileus is "Ajax the less," a hero of the second rank. Scholars have conjectured on other grounds that in some older form of the Iliad-saga Ajax son of Ileus was of much greater importance. The father "Telamon" and the

connection with Aegina are neither of them original in the myth.

P. 12, l. 182, Achilles' horses.]—They are as glorious in the Iliad as they are here. Cf. especially the passages where they bear Automedon out of the battle (end of XVI.), and where Xanthos is given a human voice to warn his master of the coming of death (end of XIX.). The heroic age of Greece delighted in horses. Cf. those of Aeneas, Diomedes, Eumêlus, and Rhesus himself.

P. 15, ll. 225–263, Chorus.]—Apollo is appealed to as a God of Thymbra in the Troad, of Delos the Ionian island, and of Lycia in the South of Asia Minor; the god of Asiatics and *barbaroi*, the enemy of the Achaeans. This is also to a great extent the conception of Apollo in the Iliad, where he fights for Troy and is Hector's special patron. The sudden ferocity towards Helen in the last strophe is quite in the manner of Euripides; cf. *Trojan Women*, 1107 ff. (p. 65), 766 ff. (p. 49), and often; also *Iph. Taur.* 438 ff. (p. 21), where her name comes somewhat as a surprise.

The stage directions here are of course conjectural: it does not seem likely that the playwright, having made Dolon describe his wolf's disguise in detail, would waste the opportunity of making him crawl off in it. Cf. on l. 594, p. 63, and at the end of the play.

P. 16, l. 267. Hector is as bluff and hasty here as he is impulsively obstinate in l. 319 ff., p. 19, impulsively frank to Rhesus in l. 393 ff., p. 23, and splendidly courteous under the gibes of the wounded charioteer, l. 856 ff., p. 47. A fine stage character, if not a very subtle study.

P. 17, l. 284 ff. The description of the march of the mountaineers, the vast crowd, the noise, the mixture of all arms, suggests personal observation. A great many fifth-century Athenians had probably served some time or other in Thrace.

P. 20, l. 342, Adrasteia.]—She-from-whom-there-is-no-Running, is a goddess identified with Nemesis, a requiter of sin, especially the sin of pride or over-confidence. In spite of the opening apology this whole chorus, with its boundless exultation, is an offence against her.—It is interesting to notice that a town and a whole district in the north of the Troad was called by her name; the poet is using local colour in making his Trojans here, and Rhesus in l. 468, speak of her. There seems also to be something characteristically Thracian in the story of the Muse and the River, in the title "Zeus of the Dawn" given to Rhesus, in the revelry to be held when Ilion is free, and in the conception of the king in his dazzling chariot, Sun-god-like.

P. 23, ll. 394–453, Speeches of Hector and Rhesus.] —The scene reads to me like a rather crude and early form of the celebrated psychological controversies of Euripides. It is simple, but spirited and in character. The description of Thracian fighting again suggests personal knowledge, and so does the boasting. The Thracians apparently bound themselves with heroic boasts before battle much as Irish and Highland chieftains sometimes did, or as the Franks did with their *gabs*. (See, *e.g.*, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, as described in Gaston Paris, *Litt. du Moyen Age*, I. p. 122 ff.) It was a disgrace if you did not fulfil your *gab* afterwards.

Rhesus's defence is apparently true, though in a modern play one would have expected some explanation of the rather different story that his mother tells, l. 933 ff., p. 51. Perhaps he did not realise how she was holding him back. In any case ancient technique prefers to leave such details unsettled: cf., for instance, Helen's speech in the *Trojan Women*, in which the false is evidently mixed up with the true, and they are never separated afterwards.

P. 25, ll. 454 ff. This little Chorus seems to represent—in due tragic convention—an irrepressible outburst of applause from the Trojans, interrupting Rhesus's speech. In spite of the words about possible "wrath" that may follow the Thracian's boasting, the applause excites him at once to a yet bolder *gab*.

P. 26, l. 480. It may be remarked that the play here uses a fairly common Homeric phrase in a sense which the scholars of our tradition knew but rejected.

P. 27, l. 501 ff. These three achievements of Odysseus are all in the traditional saga. The Rapt of the Palladium, or figure of Pallas, by Odysseus and Diomedes, was in an old lost epic, called The Little Iliad; the Begging in Troy in the Little Iliad and also in Odyssey IV. 242 ff.; the great ambuscades in Odyssey IV. 290 ff., VIII. 493 ff., and in Odysseus's own feigned story, XIV. 468 ff. According to our tradition they belong to a later period of the war than the death of Rhesus, but perhaps the sequence was different, or not so definite, at the time of this play.

P. 28, l. 528. Rhesus shows the simple courage of a barbarian in his contempt for the ruses of Odysseus, the brutality of a barbarian in the methods of punish-

ment he proposes. Such proposals would disgust a Greek; it looks as if they displeased Hector. In any case his abruptness here, and his careful indication of the place where the Thracians are to sleep, far from the rest of the camp, have some dramatic value for the sequel.

Pp. 28–30, ll. 527–564, Stars and Nightingale chorus.]—The beauty of these lines in the Greek is quite magical, but the stage management of the scene is difficult. Apparently Hector (l. 523) bids the Guards come forward from where they are and wait nearer the front for Dolon; obeying this they come up from the orchestra, we may suppose, to the stage. Then watching somewhere near Hector's tent they partly express, in the usual song, the lyrical emotion of the night, partly they chat about Dolon and the order of the watches. The scene is technically very interesting with its rather abrupt introduction of realism into the high convention of tragedy. Meantime the Trojans' time of watch is over and the Lycians, who ought to watch next, have not come. In a modern army it would of course be the duty of the new watch to come and relieve the old; in an ancient barbaric army—characteristically—the old watch had to go and wake the new. You could not, one must suppose, trust them to take their turn otherwise. At the end of the first strophe a Guard suggests that they should rouse the Lycians; at the end of the second the Leader definitely gives the word to do so. The Guards go, and so the stage (and orchestra) is left empty.

This is plain enough; but why were the Guards brought away from their original position—from the

orchestra to the stage? Probably to allow the Greek spies to pass on towards the Thracian camp by a different and unoccupied way, not by the way which the Guards had just taken.

The story of the Nightingale is well known: she was Philomêla, or in the older story Procnê, an Athenian princess, wedded to the faithless Thracian king, Têreus. In a fury of vengeance on her husband she slew their only son, Itys or Itylus, and now laments him broken-hearted for ever.

P. 31, l. 567 ff., Odysseus and Diomedes.]—Observe how we are left gradually to discover that they have met and killed Dolon. They enter carrying, as far as we can make out, a wolf-skin that looks like his: they had evidently spoken to him, ll. 572, 575: it *is* his and they have killed him—l. 592 f.

All the Odysseus-Diomedes scenes have something unusual about them, something daring, turbulent, and perhaps lacking in dramatic tact. The silent rush on Hector's empty tent is hard to parallel. The cruel Athena is Euripidean; but her appearance in the midst of the action is startling, though it may be paralleled from Sophocles' Ajax. In Euripides Gods are generally kept for the prologue or epilogue, away from the ordinary action. (The vision of Iris and Lyssa in the middle of the Heracles has at least the stage clear of mortals and the Chorus apparently in a kind of dream.) Again the conception of Athena pretending to be Cypris is curious. The disguised Athena is common in the Odyssey, but she does not disguise herself as another goddess. (It is sometimes held that this scene requires four actors, which would be a decisive mark of lateness; but this is not really so.

The actor who took Odysseus could easily get round in time to take Paris also—especially if he made his exit at l. 626, before Athena sees Paris. And the Greek stage had no objection to such doubling.) Lastly, the scene of turmoil between the spies and the Guards is extraordinary in a tragedy, though it would suit well in a pro-satyric play. See Introduction.

P. 33, l. 594, Stage direction.]—They bear Dolon's "spoils" or "tokens": probably his wolf-skin. If they bring it with them they must probably do something with it, and to hang it where it may give Hector a violent start seems the natural proceeding. Also, they can hardly be carrying it in the scene with the Guards, l. 675 ff., p. 38 f. That would be madness. They must have got rid of it before then, and this seems the obvious place for doing so.

P. 36, ll. 637 ff., Athena as Cypris.]—It is not clear how this would be represented on the Greek stage, though there is no reason to think there would be any special difficulty. On a modern stage it could be worked as follows:—The Goddess will be behind a gauze, so that she is invisible when only the lights in front of the gauze are lit, but visible when a light goes up behind it. She will first appear with helmet and spear in some hard light; then disappear and be rediscovered in the same place in a softer light, the helmet and spear gone and some emblems of Cypris—say a flower and a dove—in their place. Of course the voice will change too.

The next scene, where the two spies are caught and let go, is clear enough in its general structure; the details must remain conjectural.

P. 40, l. 703, What the High God.]—It would be

unparalleled in classical Greek to describe a man by his religion; but this phrase seems only to mean: "What is his tribal God?" *i.e.* what is his tribe? Thus it could be said of Isagoras in Herodotus (v. 66) that his kinsmen sacrificed to Carian Zeus, suggesting, presumably, that he had Carian blood.

P. 42, l. 728, Voice of the wounded man outside.]—The puzzled and discouraged talk of the Guards round the fire, the groaning in the darkness without, the quick alarm among the men who had been careless before, and the slow realisation of disaster that follows—all these seem to me to be wonderfully indicated, though the severe poetic convention excludes any approach to what we, by modern prose standards, would call effective realism.

P. 44, ll. 756–803. This fine vivid speech has something of the famous Euripidean Messenger-Speeches in it; though they are apt to be much longer and also are practically never spoken by a principal in the action, always by a subordinate or an onlooker. Cf. the speech of the Messenger-Shepherd above, p. 17 f. An extreme sharpness of articulation is characteristic of Euripides' later work: each speech, each scene, each effect is isolated and made complete in itself. The Messenger prepares his message, relates his message and goes, not mixing himself up in the further fortunes of the drama. But this extreme pursuit of lucidity and clear outlines is not nearly so marked in the early plays: in the *Cyclops* the Messenger's speech is actually spoken by Odysseus, ll. 382–436, and the Serving Man and Serving Maid in the *Alcestis* are not mere abstract Messengers.

P. 46, ll. 810–830, Hector and the Guard.]—There

is intentional colour here—the impulsive half-barbaric rage of Hector, the oriental grovelling of the Guard, and of course the quick return to courteous self-mastery with which Hector receives the taunts of the wounded man.

P. 46, l. 819. The Guard seems to think that the spies got past him when he came to Hector's tent at the beginning of the play. It was really later, when he made his men leave their post to wake the Lycians. Perhaps he is lying.

P. 48, l. 876, Justice knows.]—It is a clever touch to leave the Thracian still only half-convinced and grumbling.

P. 49, l. 882, Appearance of the Muse.]—A beautiful scene. It has been thought to come abruptly and, as it were, unskilfully on top of the familiar dialogue between Hector and the Thracian. But the movements, first of soldiers lifting and carrying the wounded man, and then of messengers taking word to Priam for burial of the men slain, make the transition much easier.

P. 50, l. 895 ff. and l. 906 ff., A dirge of the Thracian mountains.]—Such dirges must have struck the Greeks as the fragments of Ossian struck the Lowlanders among us. I have found that the dirge here goes naturally into a sort of Ossianic rhythm.

P. 51, l. 915. The speech of the Muse seems like the writing of a poet who is, for the moment, tired of mere drama, and wishes to get back into his own element. Such passages are characteristic of Euripides.—The death of Rhesus seems to the Muse like an act of vengeance from the dead Thamyris, the Thracian bard who had blasphemed the Muses and

challenged them to a contest of song. They conquered him and left him blind, but still a poet. The story in Homer is more terrible, though more civilised: "They in wrath made him a maimed man, they took away his heavenly song and made him forget his harping."

Thamyris, the bard who defied Heaven; Orpheus, the bard, saint, lover, whose severed head still cried for his lost Eurydice; Musaeus, the bard of mystic wisdom and initiations—are the three great legendary figures of this Northern mountain minstrelsy.

P. 52, l. 950. These short speeches between Hector and the Leader of the Guard make a jarring note in the midst of the Muse's lament. Perhaps it would not be so if we knew how the play was produced, but at present this seems like one of several marks of comparative crudity in technique which mark the play, amid all its daring and inventiveness.

P. 52, l. 962 ff., My son shall not be laid in any grave.]—Like other Northern barbaric princes, such as Orpheus (l. 972 below) and Zalmoxis (Herodotus, iv. 95) and Holgar the Dane, Rhesus lies in a hidden chamber beneath the earth, watching, apparently, for the day of uttermost need when he must rise to help his people. There is no other passage in Greek tragedy where such a fate is attributed to a hero, though the position of Darius in the *Persae* and Agamemnon in the *Choephori* or the *Electra* is in some ways analogous.

The last lines of the Muse have a very Euripidean ring: cf. *Medea*, l. 1090 (p. 61, "My thoughts have roamed a cloudy land"), *Alcestis*, l. 882.

P. 54, ll. 983–end. This curious and moving end

—not in death or peace but in a girding of tired men to greater toil—reminds one of the last words of *The Trojan Women*: "Forth to the long Greek ships And the sea's foaming," and the last words of the *Chanson de Roland* there quoted.

The Trojans evidently go forth under the shadow of disaster, though with firmness and courage. The stage direction is of course purely conjectural. If Diomedes left some sign of Dolon's death for Hector to see, as he probably must have done, then Hector must at some time or other see it. If so, this seems to be the place.

THE END

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